THE MOST BEAUTIFUL VILLAGES OF FRANCE

Practical info • History and tours • Festivals and activities
Gourmet and artisanal specialties

Flammarion
Inside story
The association of Les Plus Beaux Villages de France® was founded in the early summer of 1981 when one man encountered a certain book. That man was Charles Ceyrac, mayor of the village of Collonges-la-Rouge in Corrèze, and the book was Les Plus Beaux Villages de France, published by Sélection du Reader’s Digest. This book gave Ceyrac the idea of harnessing people’s energy and passion to protect and promote the exceptional heritage of France’s most beautiful villages. Sixty-six mayors signed up to Charles Ceyrac’s initiative, which was made official on March 6, 1982 at Salers in Cantal, France.

Today, this national network of almost 160 villages works to protect and enhance the heritage of these exceptional locations in order to increase their renown and promote their economic development.

Three steps to becoming one of The Most Beautiful Villages of France

Three preliminary criteria
In the first instance, the village looking to join the association must submit an application showing that it meets the following criteria:
• a total population (whether village or hamlet) of no more than 2,000 inhabitants
• at least two protected sites or monuments (historic landmarks, etc.)
• proof of mass support for the application for membership via public debate

Twenty-seven evaluation criteria
If these three conditions are met, the application is accepted. The village then receives a site visit. After an interview with the local council and a photographic report have been completed, a table of twenty-seven criteria is used to evaluate the village’s heritage, architectural, urban, and environmental attributes, as well as its own municipal initiatives to promote the village.

The verdict of the Quality Commission
The finished evaluation report is put before the Quality Commission, which alone has the power to make decisions on whether a village should be accepted (an outcome requiring a two-thirds majority in the vote). About ten candidates apply each year, and about 20% of applications are successful. The approved villages are also subject to regular re-evaluation in order to guarantee each visitor an outstanding experience.

A concept that has traveled the globe
Interest in preserving and enhancing rural heritage transcends national boundaries, and several initiatives throughout Europe and the rest of the world have given rise to other associations on the French model: Les Plus Beaux Villages de Wallonie (Belgium) in 1994; Les Plus Beaux Villages du Québec (Canada) in 1998; I Borghi Più Belli d’Italia in 2001; The Most Beautiful Villages of Japan in 2005; and Los Pueblos Más Bonitos de España in 2011. Collaborating with the Federation of the Most Beautiful Villages of the World, these associations are now taking their particular expertise to emerging networks.

To read more about the association, visit www.lesplusbeauvilagesdefrance.org

BECOME A FRIEND OF THE ASSOCIATION
Join us and play your part in protecting the heritage of French villages by becoming a Friend of The Most Beautiful Villages of France. In return for your membership fee you will receive special privileges, gifts, and discounts to help you get the most out of your stay. Participating establishments are marked with a H in this guide.

Membership details are available at the back of this book.
Montrésor

In the heart of the Loire valley, on the banks of the Indrois

Indre-et-Loire (37) • Population: 350 • Altitude: 328 ft. (100 m)

Montrésor gets its name from the Treasurer (Trésorier) of the chapter house at Tours Cathedral, which owned this area in the 10th century. In the early 11th century, the powerful count of Anjou, Foulques III, nicknamed “Foulque Nerra” (Fulk III, the Black), began to build a fortress at Montrésor in order to defend the approaches to the Touraine. Remains of the double ring of defenses are still visible. Inside its wall, at the end of the 15th century, Imbert de Bastarnay (advisor to the French kings Louis XI, Charles VIII, Louis XII, and François I) built the present castle in the Renaissance style. He is also responsible for the collegiate church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, which houses an Annunciation painted by Philippe de Champaigne (1602–1674), as well as tombs of members of his family. In 1849, the castle became the property of Xavier Branicki, a Polish count and friend of Napoléon III. He restored it and filled it with many works of art: sculptures by Pierre Vanneau, and Italian Renaissance and Dutch paintings. Count Branicki also gave his name to one of the streets cut into the rock, where half-troglodytic and half-timbered houses rub shoulders. Cardeux Market, once the wool market, has been restored as a cultural center and exhibition space, and recalls village life in bygone days. The 16th-century Chancelier’s Lodge, which has a watchtower, houses the present town hall. The riverside walk, “Balcons de l’Indrois,” provides wonderful views of the village from the footbridge to Jardinier Bridge, which was built by Eiffel’s workshop.

By road:
Expressway A85, exit 11–Bléré (37 miles/57 km); N76 (34 miles/55 km).
By train: Tours station (34 miles/55 km); Saint-Pierre-des-Corps TGV station (34 miles/55 km).
By air: Tours-Saint-Symphorien airport (42 miles/68 km).

Tourist information: +33 (0)2 47 92 70 71 www.loches-valdeloire.com

Events

Market: Local produce, Monday evenings.
Pentecost: Pardon de Saint-Mathurin procession, Pentecost festivities.
July-August: Sporting and cultural activities (daily).

Outdoor Activities
Walking, horse-riding, and mountain-biking • Nordic walking • Fishing.

Further Afield
• Plémy (3 miles/5 km).
• Hénon, Quessoy, and Trébry: parks and residences of Ancien Régime notables (3½–5 miles/5.5–8 km).
• Saint-Gien: Village des Automates, clockwork and robotic toys (July and August) (6 miles/9.5 km).
• Lannabé (10 miles/16 km).
• Saint-Brieuc (10 miles/16 km).
• Lamballe (15 miles/24 km).
• Quintin: castle and Musée Atelier du Tisserand et des Toiles, working weaving museum (18 miles/29 km).

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Expressway A85, exit 11–Bléré (37 miles/57 km); N76 (34 miles/55 km).
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M. Ruffet**: +33 (0)2 96 61 46 85 or +33 (0)6 33 38 37 18.
Mme Picard: +33 (0)2 96 61 46 85 or +33 (0)6 61 94 38 45.

Campsites
La Tourelle**: +33 (0)2 96 73 50 65 or +33 (0)6 76 74 85 04.

Eating Out
Adana Kebab: +33 (0)2 96 76 02 72.
Au Coin du Feu, crêperie/pizzeria: +33 (0)2 96 73 49 10.
Le Chaudron Magique: +33 (0)2 96 73 40 34.
La Mulette: +33 (0)2 96 73 50 37.
La Poterne: +33 (0)2 96 73 40 01.
Les Remparts: +33 (0)2 96 73 54 83.

Local Specialties
Art and Crafts
Ceramic artist • Dressmaker and hatter • Beadmaker • Stylist • Costume designer • Painter • Stained-glass artist • Résidence des Arts (exhibitions and residencies by artists and craftspeople).
Montsoreau

The lady’s castle

Maine-et-Loire (49) • Population: 447 • Altitude: 108 ft (33 m)

Montsoreau sits between Anjou and the Touraine, in a land of history, sweetness, and harmony.

Lying between the Loire and a hill, and very close to the royal abbey of Fontevraud, Montsoreau grew up around its 15th-century castle. The village draws a rich heritage from the Loire river and Montsoreau’s lady, Françoise de Maridor. Alexandre Dumas wrote tales about her passionate and fatal love affair with Bussy d’Amboise. There is something for everyone here: wander the village’s flower-lined paths that climb toward the vineyards, and admire its white tufa-stone residences and immaculately tended gardens. Stroll the courtyards and alleyways, beyond which the Loire stretches into the distance: roam the Saut aux Loups hillside, where historic cave dwellings nestle. Taste some famous Saumur-Champigny and Crémant de Loire wines at a local vineyard.

Accommodation

Guesthouses
Le Moulin de Montsoreau***: +33 (0)2 47 92 68 20.
La Grenache: +33 (0)2 47 92 71 39.
Maisons de Charme: +33 (0)6 86 44 63 72.
Further information: +33 (0)2 47 27 70 71.

Eating Out

Café de la Vile: +33 (0)2 47 92 75 31.
Crêperie Barapom: +33 (0)2 47 19 27 48.
La Légende: +33 (0)2 47 92 61 90.

Local Specialties

Food and Drink
Montrésor macarons • Montrésor rillettes.

Art and Crafts
Local crafts (Maison de Pays shop) • Painter.

Events

July-August: “Nuits Solaires” evening festival, illuminated trail accompanied by music and events on the banks of the Indrois; painters’ and sculptors’ fair (August 15).
December: Christmas market.

Outdoor Activities

Boats: playing field • Fishing • Walking: 2 marked trails • Cycling • Horse-riding trails.

Further Afield

• Lac de Chemillé, lake (1½ miles/2 km).
• Château de Montpoupon; Cher valley: Chenonceaux; Loire valley: Amboise (18¼–28 miles/30–45 km).
• Château de Valençay (19 miles/31 km).

I Did you know?

According to legend, the young Gontran, who became king of Burgundy from 561 to 592, fell asleep in his equerry’s lap on a riverbank and dreamed of treasure hidden in a cave. The equerry saw a small lizard run over Gontran’s face; it dashed toward a nearby hill and returned covered in gold. When the king was told this vision, he quickly had the hill excavated and discovered enormous wealth there. But the chronicles of the Middle Ages reveal that this estate belonged to the Treasurer of Tour Cathedral’s chapter house. This explains why during the 10th century it was called Mons Thesauri (mount of the Treasurer), which later became Montrésor.
Eguisheim
Enter the round
Haut-Rhin (68) • Population: 1,802 • Altitude: 689 ft. (210 m)

Just a short distance from Colmar, Eguisheim—the birthplace of wine-growing in Alsace—winds in concentric circles around its castle.

Whether around the castle at the center of the village, which witnessed the birth of the future Pope Leo IX (1002–1054), or along the ramparts that encircle it, Eguisheim encourages visitors to go round in circles. With every step, from courtyard to fountain, lane to square, the ever-present curve changes one’s perspective of the colorful houses arrayed with flowers, half-timbering, and oriel windows. Rebuilt in the Gothic style, the Église Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul is distinguished by its high square tower of yellow sandstone, and a magnificent tympanum depicting Christ in Majesty flanked by two saints, as well as the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins.
The winemakers’ and coopers’ houses, with their large courtyards, are a reminder that—as well as being a feast for the eyes—Eguisheim also delights the palate with its grand cru wines, which are celebrated with festivals throughout the year.
Hunawihr
The colors of the vines
Haut-Rhin (68) • Population: 603 • Altitude: 525 ft. (160 m)

Situated on the Alsace wine route amid the vineyards, Hunawihr is a typical Alsatian village, bedecked with flowers. Hunawihr owes its name to a laundrywoman, Saint Huna; according to legend, she lived here in the 7th century with her husband, the Frankish lord, Hunon. The 15th–16th-century church contains 15th-century frescoes that recount the life of Saint Nicholas. Surrounded by a cemetery fortified by six bastions, it is built on the hill overlooking the village, whose attractions include the Saint June Fountain with its washhouse, the town hall (formerly the corn exchange), half-timbered houses, and bourgeois residences from the 16th and 19th centuries. Nature-lovers can visit the center for reintroducing storks and otters, and the butterfly garden—both magical places.

† Highlights
• Church (15th and 16th centuries) and its fortified cemetery: Saint Nicholas frescoes (15th century).
• Centre de Réintroduction des Cigognes et des Loups: NaturOpAR, 12-acre (5-ha.) wildlife park dedicated to reintroducing and preserving storks, otters, and other local species: +33 (0)3 89 73 33 33.
• Village: Guided tour of the church and village every Wednesday and Friday in July and August, meet at 6.15 p.m. at the church: +33 (0)3 89 73 23 23; Randolanda, recreational discovery trail around the village.
• Grands crus wine trail: Permanent discovery trail; guided tour by a winemaker and free tasting sessions in summer. Further information: +33 (0)3 89 73 61 67.

By road: Expressway A35, exit 23–Ribeauvillé then N83 (5½ miles/9 km).
By rail: Colmar station (11 miles/18 km).
By air: Bâle-Mulhouse airport (47 miles/76 km).
Tourist information: +33 (0)3 89 73 23 23 www.hunawihr.fr

Did you know?
The village joined the Reformation in 1537, but after Alsace was annexed to France in 1648 Catholicism was reintroduced “simultaneously”—whereby Protestants and Catholics share a church but worship at different times—was instigated in 1687 and is ongoing.

† Vineyards: Guided tour followed by a guided tasting session every Thursday at 4 p.m. in July and August. Further information: +33 (0)3 89 73 33 33.

† Eating Out
Caveau du Vigneron: +33 (0)3 89 73 70 15.
O’Goutchi: +33 (0)3 89 88 23.
Wistub Suzel: +33 (0)3 89 73 30 85.

† Local Specialties
Food and Drink
Distilled spirits • AOC Alsace wines, Crémant d’Alsace, and grand cru Rosacker (Gewürztraminer, Riesling, Pinot Gris).

† Events
August: Hunafascht, Alsatian open-air evenings under paper lanterns (1st Friday and Saturday).

† Outdoor Activities
Cycle touring • Walking • Mountain-biking, 1 marked trail • Chemin de Compostelle (Saint James’s Way) trail.

† Further Afield
• Alsace wine route: *Riquewihr (1 mile/1.5 km), see pp. 74–75; Ribeauvillé; Bergheim; Kintzheim; *Eguisheim (12 miles/19 km), see pp. 60–61.
• Haut-Koenigsbourg (8½ miles/13.5 km).
• Colmar; Sélestat (9½ miles/15.5 km).
• *Mittelbergheim (23 miles/37 km), see pp. 69–70.

† Accommodation
Guesthouses
Further information: +33 (0)3 89 73 23 23 www.ribeauville-riquewihr.com www.hunawihr.fr

† Gîtes and vacation rentals
Further information: +33 (0)3 89 73 23 23 www.ribeauville-riquewihr.com www.hunawihr.fr
Jewel of the Luberon

Gordes

Like an eagle’s nest perched on the foothills of the Monts de Vaucluse, facing the famous Luberon mountain, Gordes is the archetypal Provençal village.

Surrounded by a mosaic of holm oaks, wheat fields, and vines, the village’s dry-stone houses—solidly attached to the rock—seem to tumble down in cascades. Its history, its rich architecture and heritage, its marvelous views, its cobble winding lanes, and its fountain shaded by a plane tree on the Place du Château have appealed to numerous artists, from André Lhote (1885–1962) and Pol Mara (1920–1998) to Victor Vasarely (1906–1997). A short distance from the village, at the end of a lavender field, which in springtime enhances the pale stone of its façade, the Abbaye de Sénanque is a perfect example of Cistercian architecture and is still inhabited by monks.

**Highlights**

- Abbaye de Sénanque (12th century): The church, dormitory, cloister, and chapter house can be visited on guided tours. Further information: +33 (0)4 90 72 02 25.
- Cells of the Palais Saint-Firmin: Situated beneath a large house, the cells feature caves, crypts, and an old seigneurial oil press; documentary, museum, MP3 audioguide. Further information: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 13.
- Moulin des Bouillons and Musée du Vitrail: One of the oldest preserved oil mills with all its workings, preserving the press from the 1st to the 14th centuries, collections of glass and stained-glass windows via a spiral staircase. The Musée du Vitrail recounts the history of stained glass and is a perfect example of the Art and Crafts of the 20th century. Further information: +33 (0)4 90 72 02 02.
- Aix-en-Provence: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 12.
- Château de la Hêtraie: +33 (0)4 90 72 00 51.
- Château de la Robine: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 98.
- Château de la Roberie: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 12.
- Château de la Roquette: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 41.
- Château de la Tour: +33 (0)4 90 72 00 20.
- Château de la Tour des Bories: +33 (0)4 90 72 00 51.
- Château de Séguret: +33 (0)4 90 72 12 12.
- Château de Vabre: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 41.
- Château de la Verrerie: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 98.
- Château de Verteillac: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 41.
- Château de Viste: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 98.
- Château de Visté: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 41.
- Château de Vincelence: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 41.
- Château de Vincelles: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 41.
- Château de Vintimelle: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 41.
- Château de Viny: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 41.
- Château de Visté: +33 (0)4 90 72 06 41.
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La Roque-sur-Cèze
Stone, vines, and water

Gard (30) • Population: 178 • Altitude: 295 ft. (90 m)

Surrounded by garrigue scrubland, La Roque-sur-Cèze has established itself on a rocky slope overlooking the Cèze river and surrounding vineyards.

Past the Pont Charles-Martel with its twelve arches, along steep, winding, cobbled streets, lies an endless jumble of buildings, rooftops, and covered terraces, whose sun-weathered stone walls and Genoese tiles give them a Tuscan feel. When you reach the top of the village, a certain amount of physical exertion, the ruins of the 12th-century castle and its Romanesque chapel are reminders of the strategic position that the site enjoyed in the Middle Ages on the Roman road leading from Nîmes to Alba. Presenting a sharp contrast with the serenity and aridity of the village are the dramatic waterfalls, rapids, and crevices of the Cascades du Sautadet, including the magnificent “giants’ cauldrons”—cylindrical cavities, some of them huge, cut into the Cèze; they require great caution but offer a refreshing place to relax in the wilderness.

Le Mas du Belier: +33 (0)4 66 82 21 39.
Pizzeria Camping Les Cascade: +33 (0)4 66 82 08 42.
Wine and Food: +33 (0)4 66 79 08 89.

Local Specialties
Food and Drink
AOC Côtes du Rhône wines.

Events
May: “En mai fais ce qu’il te plait,” month-long festival of food, wine, and nature.
Mid-August: Jam fair.
Throughout the summer: Concerts and entertainment as part of “Les Arts de la Voix” festival.

Outdoor Activities
Walking and mountain-biking • Swimming • Canoeing • Fishing.

Further Afield
• Chartreuse de Valbonne, monastery (3¼ miles/5 km).
• Cornillon; Goudargues (5 miles/8 km).
• Pont-Saint-Esprit (6 miles/9.5 km).
• Bagnols-sur-Cèze: market (7½ miles/12 km).

Accommodation
Guesthouses
Mme Welland**: +33 (0)4 66 79 27 76.
M. and Mme Dupart: +33 (0)6 23 09 17 09.

Gîtes and vacation rentals
Further information: +33 (0)4 66 82 30 02
www.tourisme-gardrhodanien.com

Campsites
Les Cascades****: +33 (0)4 66 82 72 97.
La Vallée Verte****: +33 (0)4 66 79 08 89.

Eating Out
L’Auberge des Cascades: +33 (0)4 66 82 30 02.
Le Bistrot de la Roque: +33 (0)4 66 82 78 42.
Chez Piou, open-air café/restaurant (summer only): +33 (0)4 66 82 77 72.
Enfin Voilà l’été (summer only): +33 (0)6 68 02 89 26.

By road: Expressway A7, exit 19–Bollène (17 miles/28 km); expressway A9, exit 22–Houjouponsaure (23 miles/37 km).
By train: Bollène-La Croisière station (25 miles/40 km); Avignon TGV station (69 miles/111 km).
By air: Avignon-Caumont airport (32 miles/51 km); Nîmes-Alès-Camargue-Cévennes airport (50 miles/80 km).

Tourist information—Gard Rhodanien: +33 (0)4 66 82 30 02
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Aubeterre-sur-Dronne
Monolithic grandeur amid the white rocks

Charente (16) • Population: 422 • Altitude: 295 ft (90 m)
Nestled against a chalky limestone cliff, Aubeterre overlooks the verdant valley of the Dronne river and boasts an extraordinary cultural heritage. Around its central square, a labyrinth of roofs and house fronts bedecked with wooden galleries and balconies stretches out. Facing the castle of this old fortress town, which was destroyed by the English and then by the Huguenots, and whose imposing gate still overlooms the Dronne, stands the Église Saint-Jacques, with its fine Romanesque façade. At the turn of every street and steep alleyway, the visitor is reminded of Aubeterre’s religious past: pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela would stop here. The abbey church built by the monks and the ruined castle, witnesses to the development of Aubeterre, are now a quiet village with village houses and merchant houses are still visible on the Rue du Havre.

Did you know?
Producing more than 2,000 tons of salt every year, the salt marshes lie behind the Dronne. The huge salt marshes are the Monolithic Saint-Jean, which was carved into the rock. Every year, the salt marshes lie behind the Dronne. The huge salt marshes are the Monolithic Saint-Jean, which was carved into the rock.

Outdoor Activities
Bathing: La Grange beach • Cycling: Cycle paths across the marshes to the nature reserve at Fiers d’Ars • Sailing • Riding • Thalassotherapy

Further Afield
• Saint-Clement-des-Baleines: Lighthouse and Parc des Incais (3 miles/5 km)
• Les Portes-en-Ré: Maison du Fer et de la Nature (6 miles/9.5 km)
• L’Isle-en-Ré: Écomusée du Marais Salant, local heritage museum (7½ miles/12 km)
• Saint-Martin-de-Ré: fortifications (7½ miles/12 km)
• La Flotte (1½ miles/18 km), see pp. 196–97
• La Rochelle (21 miles/34 km).

Events
Markets: Daily 8 a.m.–1 p.m., Place du Marché-d’Été (April–September) or Tuesdays and Fridays 8 a.m.–1 p.m., Place Carnot (Winter).
July and August: Concerts, “Embrasement du Clocher,” firework display and dance, regattas

- Highlights
  - Église Saint-Étienne (12th, 13th, and 17th centuries): Romanesque style, arched door, rich furnishings.
  - Tours of the bell tower and salt marshes: April to September.
  - Huitrière de Ré, oyster farm: Guided tours April to September, Wednesday evening

- Accommodation
  - Hotels
    - Le Clocher***: +33 (0)5 46 29 41 20.
    - Le Martray***: +33 (0)5 46 29 40 04.
    - Le Paradis***: +33 (0)5 46 29 40 42.
  - Thalassotherapy resorts
    - Côté Thalasso Ile de Ré***:
    - Le Martray***: +33 (0)5 46 29 40 04.
    - Le Clocher***: +33 (0)5 46 29 41 20.
  - Vacation rentals and guesthouses
    - La Salicorne, VVF: +33 (0)5 46 29 45 13.

- Eating Out
  - Le 20 [vingt], wine bar, world cuisine: +33 (0)5 46 29 04 54.
  - Aux Frères de la Côte, brasserie: +33 (0)5 46 29 41 57.
  - Au Goûter Breton: +33 (0)5 46 29 41 36.
  - L’Anne xe: +33 (0)5 46 34 06 71.

- Local Specialties
  - Food and Drink
    - Strawberry • Shrimp • Oysters • AOP fleur de sel • Wine and Pineau.

- Further Information
  - Tourist information: +33 (0)5 45 98 57 18
  - www.sudcharentetourisme.fr
  - www.aubeterresurdronne.com

- Outdoor Activities
  - Bathing: La Grange beach • Cycling: Cycle paths across the marshes to the nature reserve at Fiers d’Ars • Sailing: 3 marked trails • Sailing: Riding • Thalassotherapy

- Further Afield
  - Saint-Clement-des-Baleines: Lighthouse and Parc des Incais (3 miles/5 km)
  - Les Portes-en-Ré: Maison du Fer et de la Nature (6 miles/9.5 km)
  - L’Isle-en-Ré: Écomusée du Marais Salant, local heritage museum (7½ miles/12 km)
  - Saint-Martin-de-Ré: fortifications (7½ miles/12 km)
  - La Flotte (1½ miles/18 km), see pp. 196–97
  - La Rochelle (21 miles/34 km).

- Did you know?
  - Producing more than 2,000 tons of salt every year, the salt marshes lie behind the development of Ars. The huge salt marshes, where the salt was stored, now houses the covered market, and some fine merchant houses are still visible on the Rue du Havre.
Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges
Ancient guardian of the Pyrenees

Haute-Garonne (31) * Population: 259 * Altitude: 1,700 ft. (518 m)

Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges owes its name to the bishop who built its cathedral. Located at the foot of the Pyrenees, the village still contains the ruins of a Roman forum, established in 72 BCE by Pompey on his return from Spain. Considered to be King Herod’s place of exile, the town grew up around a basilica in the 4th century before it was destroyed by the Vandals and then the Burgundians. Bertrand, bishop of Comminges, rebuilt the village from its ruins and installed an episcopal court here. Military in appearance, the Cathedral-Sainte-Marie, which was remodeled in the 14th century by the future pope Clement V, retains its 12th-century bell tower, its cloisters giving onto the Pyrenees, and its portal representing the Adoration of the Magi, the Virgin and Child, and Saint Bertrand. A rood screen stands in front of the choir and its sixty-six carved oak stalls and 16th-century episcopal throne. Fine dwellings from the 16th–18th centuries huddle around the cathedral. Forming a girdle around the old town, the ramparts are punctuated by the Majo, Cabirole, and l’Hyrisson gateways.

By road:
Expressway A64, exit 17–Luchon (4 miles/6 km).
By train:
Montréjeau station (4 ½ miles/7 km).
By air:
Tarbes, Ossun, Lourdes airport (45 miles/72 km); Toulouse-Blagnac airport (72 miles/116 km).

Tourist information:
Saint-Gaudinois: +33 (0)5 61 94 77 61
www.tourisme-stgaudens.com

Accommodation
Hotels
L’Oppidum**: +33 (0)5 61 88 33 50.
Les Comminges**: +33 (0)5 61 88 31 43.
Guesthouses
La Randonnée de Saint-Jacques: +33 (0)5 61 95 44 44.
Gîtes, walkers’ lodges, and vacation rentals
Further information: +33 (0)5 61 95 44 44.
Campsites
Es Pibous**: +33 (0)5 61 94 98 20.

Eating Out
Restaurants
Le Bistrot Gourmand – Chez Martine: +33 (0)6 27 29 08 63.
Chez Simone: +33 (0)5 61 94 91 05.
La Vieille Auberge: +33 (0)5 61 88 36 60.

Local Specialties
Food and Drink
Cassoulet • Foie gras • Porc noir de Bigorre (rare-breed pork) • Croustade (flaky fruit pastry) • Tome des Pyrénées cheese
Art and Crafts
Jewelry, fossils, and minerals • Leatherwork, saddlery • Umbrella-maker • Blacksmith • Clogs.

Events
July: Local fête.
July and August: Gourmet food markets; “Nocturnes de Saint-Bertrand,” themed strolls, cathedral meditation (each Thursday except 1st week July).

Outdoor Activities
Walks: CK 6561 and 2 trails.

Further Afield
• Valcabrère: basilica (1 mile/2 km).
• Barbazan (3 miles/5 km).
• La Barousse valley (4 ½ miles/7 km).
• Gargas: caves (5 miles/8 km).
• Montréjeau and Saint-Gaudens (5½–11 miles/9–17 km).
• Bagnères-de-Luchon (20 miles/32 km).

Accommodation
Hotels

Eating Out
Restaurants

Local Specialties
Food and Drink
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